

rials to allow them to perish. What if, during times of strife and revolution, the hand of violence has defaced and injured them,—ought we not to repair the wanton destruction, and to efface the memory of an act dishonouring to humanity?

Let us fancy the shade of the mighty conqueror of Agincourt, regarding with wonder the mere fragment of his monument, once raised with so much cost and magnificence, and imagine his indignant reply, when addressed in the following terms. "Sire, you have, by your noble character and deeds, acquired a place in the affections and respect of Englishmen. Behold your tomb! The stone is decayed,—yet could be easily and authentically restored: the niches are without the groups with which they were once adorned, and rendered full of meaning; but we have artists of learning, who could, from the subjects still existing around the canopy, restore the sculptures with faithfulness and truth, although not the precise ones which once existed, for of them there is no fragment left. From authentic memorials we could restore the head and hands, and invest the wood block with its metal covering. We could restore the couchant dogs at your feet, and the angels under your pillow. And once again, instead of the crumbling stone and the shapeless headless block, your tomb might be worthy England's mighty sovereign, and the conqueror of Agincourt. But the scrupulous antiquarian, distrustful of an exact transcript of what was once there, forbids the stone to be restored, the statue to resume its parts, and the tomb of their mighty monarch to be a decent memorial of thy noble worth!"

Are we not, then, called upon to respect the intention of the erections of these noble memorials? Most of the work that is required to be done to the royal tombs in Westminster Abbey demands only a thorough knowledge of the subject, and no novelty of invention. The operation would to a degree be merely mechanical in the well-informed artisan, who, under the direction of the judicious architect of the Abbey would have only to copy with truthfulness and spirit the remains still spared.

Is the genius of a Torrell better understood without the restoration of the sceptre and tabernacle work, and other accompaniments of the exquisite figure of Eleanor of Castile? Can the beauty of the design of the mosaic work of Peter of Rome be more easily appreciated by a few scanty fragments inlaid by his artisans—for he himself had possibly never laid a tessera—than when identically completed by English workmen? Queen Philippa has lost her fingers: does this add to her antiquarian identity?

But there is this very important consideration connected with the restoration of these monuments, that, exclusive of the headless block of Henry V., not one of the effigies requires touching, excepting the hands of Philippa, already noticed. The main proof of identity as regards these monuments, is in the statue, not in the subordinate architectural accompaniments. Henry III. is perfect; so is Eleanor of Castile; so is Edward III.; Richard II. and his queen, Anne of Bohemia. Were all these statues disfigured, and their features mutilated, then might the propriety of restoration assume a more questionable shape. But when the mere mechanical portions, as it were, of the structure only require to be renewed on sufficiently well preserved remains, under the present architect of the dean and chapter, to whom the task would doubtless be entrusted, there need be no great fear of losing the impress of fidelity and truth, upon which depends, I freely admit, so much of the value and respect we willingly accord to these precious monuments of England's past worth. Surely the crumbling material is not to be more honoured than the glory of art-thought with which it was once invested.

We would ask the most impassioned admirer of the sculptures of antiquity, whether the arms restored by Bernini to the Venus de Medici have destroyed the beauty of the queen of love? Would the Laocoon's agony appear more touching, and the sculptor's con-

ception be better indicated, if this splendid group had been left to our days without the arms which Bernini replaced, and one of the sons unfastened at his side? Would the Apollo Belvedere acquire more authenticity, and give more satisfaction to the mind of the beholder, were it without the left hand and part of the drapery, and the right hand sadly mutilated?

But, it may be asked, would you have the Theseus or the Iliacus of the Parthenon restored? Certainly not! In the one case, the question is as to the renewal of a hand, a foot, or an arm; and the mere mechanical restoration of these puts us at once in possession of the whole design. But in the other, the state of dilapidation is unhappily so complete, that the appreciation of their value is almost confined to the artist, and to those whose familiarity with the works of the ancients, and whose mature studies of antique art enable them to fill up the vast hiatus which time and wanton destruction have caused in these unapproachable remains of the highest efforts of human genius.

Architecture, on the contrary, is essentially, as Quatremere de Quincy justly observes, a work consisting of similar parts, which can by exact observation be identically copied and reproduced. Thus the angular column of the portico of the Pantheon of Rome, and the entablature above, have been restored; the ordonnance of the proportions preserved, and the mind enabled to value all the harmony of its enithmy. Previously this was lost. The ruin was an abstraction. The parts were admirable,—the whole unappreciable. Where is the most zealous antiquary who would wish the return to the state of ruin? In fact, to restore is to preserve. Without this Henry the Seventh's Chapel might be a ruin, and its magic interior at this moment strewn with masses of its former grandeur, lying amidst grass and weeds, like the majestic piles of St. Baron at St. Omer, the Chapel of Holyrood at Edinburgh, or the many abbey churches in England illustrated in the admirable work of Mr. E. Sharpe, of Lancaster.

Vain would be the hope to revive all the splendour and the original state and dignity of these royal tombs. Decent preservation and repair, however, may help us to realise less imperfectly, less unsubstantially, the beautiful and perhaps matchless productions of a period still imperfectly known, little estimated, often misunderstood, and too many of whose admirable creations are unhappily irretrievably lost. Surely it is our duty to redeem from their present state of degradation, and save from absolute decay, these incomparable memorials? Shall it be said that their value consists in their mutilations, and the absence of all their original harmony, proportion, and completeness, or in that perfect relation, that exquisite combination of all the parts, and that glorious integrity of the whole design which embodied the noble conception of the designer, and once rendered them fit receptacles for the ashes of the glorious dead whom it was their destiny to enshrine?

But there is another collateral point of view in addition to their historical and religious claims, which renders the due repair of these tombs a matter of national importance. I would appeal on the ground of the educational influences which a decent restoration of the tombs would have upon the public mind. The process of reintegration would create a school of skilled artists in glass mosaics, metal work, and enamel. We are now satisfied with confining enamelling to the smallest trinkets, as a brooch or a ring, while, four or five hundred years ago, it was profusely lavished on the reliquaries and tombs, and appears on the coronets once set with jewels, on the ensigns of dignity, on the coats of arms, and even once existed on the incised brass slabs let into the pavement. And should we not gain another source of brilliant decoration by the revival of the glass mosaic in all its varied contour and sparkling tones of colour? The visitors would then be able to enter into the spirit of the original design. There would be a magnificence of conception and brilliancy of effect, that would instruct

and elevate the mind of the observer. Our nobles and our gentry would entertain a higher respect for the arts of past times, and seek to apply them in the execution of other monuments in the like manner. A richer fancy might arise—a greater love for the more elaborately finished detail. By the restoration of the paintings on the canopies—no impossible work with the authentic materials we have now at command to guide us—we should understand more of the pictorial art of those times, and learn to love their simplicity, dignity, and grace, enriched by glowing tints and varied costume.

There is one striking fact connected with the state of decay and dilapidation in most of the monuments in Westminster Abbey well worthy remark. The disfigurement in the greater number, whether from fracture of the parts or disintegration of the material, does not date beyond a century and a half. When the tomb of Philippa was recently cleared of some rough construction, in which it was inclosed about 150 years since, a portion of the Purbeck marble was there found entire, which, where exposed, had perished. Careful and trustworthy chroniclers of the Abbey of the time of Charles II. describe tombs which do not now exist. An old print shows the monument of John of Eltham in St. Edmund's Chapel, as it then remained, with its lofty stone canopy, gables, and finials complete. All these parts of the superstructure were, according to Brayley, removed only fifty years since by Dean Pearce. By the advice, as I am informed, of the late Sir Francis Chantrey, the ornamental iron-work, coeval with the tombs, was removed, under the idea that it afforded facility of reaching and destroying the carved work. Within the memory of many, the canopy of the superb memorial of Aymer de Valence was in pieces, lying in the little Chapel; and in Neale's view it is represented much dilapidated, and has been since restored. According to all accounts, the coronation of George IV.—not to mention more recent like ceremonials (and on such occasion the architect of the Abbey is superseded by the officials of the Board of Works)—was the cause of frightful devastations, never since made good. Mischief and robbery, then, have done their worst, in modern time, to the valuable, and historical, and royal mementoes, but the needful works which, at the present propitious period, might restore them to a decent state of preservation, and call back their historic worth to the student and visitor of the present day, is denied by the timid, not the enlightened antiquarian, and by the misings and ruinous tendencies of the visionary lover of the picturesque.

I would then venture to suggest, that, in order to afford every safeguard to a matter connected with the Crown, a royal commission should issue, addressed to a member of the royal family, to the proper ecclesiastical authorities, and to men well versed in the arts of the mediæval times, learned in the antique, sober-minded, intelligent as artists, skilful in the mechanical workings and processes of those periods.

Could we call in question the ultimate decision of such a tribunal, appointed for the maintenance and due reparation of the royal tombs, with proper regard for the authenticity of each detail, the period of the style of art, and the authority of contemporaneous memorials?

To carry this into effect properly it would be requisite that drawings should be taken of every tomb and casts of the parts. But not of all at once, for this would occupy so long a time, that the impression of the subject upon the public might be evaporated, and the cost might be considerable, without one substantial step taken in the work of repair—without one tomb having been rescued from its crumbling state to show in it the efficiency of the operations proposed.

Let us then resume the principles, which we have just considered, in the following summary or canons of repair and restoration:—

That a commission do issue from the Crown for the maintenance and due reparation of the royal tombs, presided over by one of the Royal Family, and composed of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Dean of Westminster, one